

Castledon School and College SEND Information Report

What kinds of Special Educational Needs does Castledon support?

Castledon School and College, part of the Zenith Multi Academy Trust, is a specialist provision for pupils from Year 1 to Year 14. We cater to children with moderate learning difficulties and other complex needs who have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). This includes pupils with additional needs such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN), Global Developmental Delay (GDD), and, where not a primary area of need, social, emotional, and mental health difficulties (SEMH). Please see our admissions policy for further details.

How does Castledon identify and assess my child's Special Educational Needs?

- All pupils have an EHCP, which is reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant to their needs.
- Staff carry out continuous observation and assessments to monitor progress and identify emerging needs.
- Pupils are assessed against national standards, from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to A-levels, where applicable. Targets are linked to the outcomes outlined in Section F of the EHCP.
- Formal internal progress review meetings are held three times a year, involving teachers, senior leaders, therapists, and external agencies where appropriate. Interventions and strategies are discussed collaboratively during these meetings.
- Additional assessments may be conducted by in-house specialists such as Occupational Therapists (OTs), Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs), and Educational Psychologists to ensure targeted support.

How does Castledon evaluate the effectiveness of SEND provision?

Provision is evaluated through:

- Ofsted inspections.
- External monitoring by the Trust, the Local Authority (LA), and other external partners.
- Moderation of pupils' work alongside staff from other special schools.
- Referrals to in-house specialists such as occupational therapists, Speech and language therapists, counsellors and Thrive practitioners. Outcomes are monitored through weekly therapy meetings and tracking grids.
- Utilisation of external behaviour consultants when needed.
- Regular reviews of the impact of interventions and additional funding, such as the Pupil Premium.
- Oversight by governors through visits and regular updates from the Headteacher.

Our work aligns with our school motto, *"Unlocking Potential"*.

How will I know how well my child is doing?

- **Autumn Term:** Transition phone call to parents during the first two weeks of term, and a Parents' Evening to discuss progress and view their child's work
- **Spring Term:** Annual Review meetings
- **Summer Term:** Informal teacher-parent meetings

- **July:** Annual Report summarising your child's achievements and progress

PLI (Personal Learning Intentions) reports are shared with parents at regular intervals throughout the year.

The school a variety of other methods to keep parents updated on their child's progress, including the online platform Class Dojo.

How will the staff support my child?

- Each child has a Pen Portrait outlining their key needs and strategies for support.
- Staffing ratios are tailored to class needs, ranging from 8:3 to 14:2. Interventions may also take place in smaller groups.
- Specialist teachers with specific subject expertise provide targeted support.
- Planning is highly differentiated to meet individual learning needs.
- Specialist input is provided by our in-house Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, and school counsellors. We also have regular NHS provision from Physiotherapists and the Specialist Nursing Team.
- The Family Inclusion Team (FIT) works closely with children and families to provide additional support on topics such as behaviour, medical needs, transport, and safeguarding.
- The Universal Support Document provides a bank of strategies and interventions to support communication and learning across the school.

How is the curriculum adapted?

- The curriculum prioritises literacy, numeracy, personal, social, and life skills while remaining broad and relevant.
- Pupils work towards becoming functionally literate, numerate, communicative, and as independent as possible.
- Opportunities are available for pupils to engage with local secondary schools or alternative provisions for specific interests or aptitudes.
- Key Stage 4 and 5 learners participate in work experience programs to develop employability skills.
- The Universal Support Document ensures consistent use of strategies and interventions across the curriculum.

How is the level of support for my child decided?

- Initial support is outlined in the EHCP.
- Support is regularly reviewed by staff, therapists, and external specialists.
- Additional needs are identified through an internal referral system.
- Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings are held to discuss, prioritise, and organise internal referrals for specialist staff to provide targeted support.

How will my child participate in activities outside the classroom?

- Pupils have access to a wide range of activities, including trips, residential experiences, Forest School, swimming, and local gym visits.
- Work placements, after-school and lunchtime clubs, and Alternative Provisions are available to ensure pupils experience a broad range of enrichment opportunities.
- Adjustments are made to ensure all pupils can participate in activities safely and meaningfully.

What support is available for my child's overall well-being?

- A comprehensive Behaviour and Relationships Policy provides structure and

guidance for staff.

- Pupils are assessed using the Thrive Approach to track social and emotional well-being.
- A Well-being Lead is established to oversee mental health and emotional support.
- The School Council captures pupil voice and ensures pupils have a say in school decisions.
- A robust Safeguarding Policy ensures pupils' safety and dignity.
- Care needs are met discreetly to promote independence where possible.
- The curriculum includes physical, cultural, and religious activities to support holistic development.
- Health Care Plans are in place for pupils with medical needs, with collaboration from health practitioners.
- The FIT and Therapy Teams provide guidance to staff and make referrals to external mental health services when needed.
- In-house qualified counsellors, including a part-time psychotherapist, are employed to support pupils' mental health needs.

What training is provided for staff?

- A comprehensive training program and induction is delivered by internal and external professionals.
- Training includes Therapeutic Thinking, delivered by county specialists, and medical training from the Specialist Nursing Team.
- Modelling and coaching are provided by specialist staff.
- The Therapy Team and other specialists offer regular training sessions.
- Team Teaching opportunities are encouraged to promote collaborative learning among staff.
- Drop-in sessions for advice from therapists are regularly scheduled.
- Training resources are shared centrally within the Trust and uploaded to the Zenith Institute platform.

How accessible is Castledon?

- All current and planned accessibility improvements are aligned with the school's Accessibility Plan, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- A changing bench and wet-room style shower in the accessible toilet to support personal care.
- Accessible toilets fitted with fold-down grab rails, full-length mirrors, and internal grab rails to aid balance and independence.
- Wheelchair-friendly access throughout the school, including ramps, flat pathways, and door thresholds to reduce trip hazards.
- All classrooms are equipped with adjustable-height desks and footrests as needed, ensuring pupils can maintain comfortable and supportive seating and posture.

How are pupils involved in decisions?

- Pupil voice is reflected in Annual Review paperwork, with support from specialist staff where appropriate.
- Individual pupil voice is gathered through tools like Talking Mats and differentiated questionnaires.
- The School Council is consulted regularly to ensure pupil input in school matters.

How are parents involved in decisions?

- Parents are introduced to the school by the FIT team, who conduct home visits and create transition plans.

- Pupils and parents are given tours and opportunities to discuss needs before joining.
- Parents can participate in coffee mornings, school events, and sports days.
- Consultations are held with parents for proposed changes to key policies.
- Parent views about their child's learning are sought as part of the Annual Review process

What if I have concerns about the provisions?

- Contact your child's class teacher to discuss concerns.
- If unresolved, speak to the Key Stage Leader.
- Further concerns can be addressed to the Headteacher.
- For unresolved issues, contact the Chair of Governors via the school office.

What special services and expertise are available?

Internal specialists include:

- Consultant Speech and Language Therapist
- Consultant Occupational Therapist
- Qualified counsellors, including a part-time psychotherapist
- Thrive practitioners
- The Family Inclusion and Transition Team (FITT), who can signpost to Level 2 services

External specialists include:

- Physiotherapists
- Specialist Nursing Team
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Educational Psychologists

How do you prepare my child for transitions?

- Home visits, school tours, and transition days are provided before joining.
- Visual and social stories are used to support transitions where needed.
- Transition plans are created for moves between school phases, and additional visits to new settings are coordinated to ensure a smooth process.
- Staff liaise with future settings to provide a comprehensive handover.
- Transition support is also provided for moves between phases within Castledon School and College.

Where can I get further information about services for my child?

The information in this report forms part of Essex's Local Offer, which can be found at www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk